

JULY 1947

ONE SHILLING

# THEATRE WORLD

Scenes from "Bless The Bride" and "Jane"



ure by Denis de Marney

LIZBETH WEBB and GEORGES GUETARY

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## GREYHOUND RACING ASSOCIATION TRUST

### MR. F. S. GENTLE ON RESTRICTIONS

The 19th ordinary general meeting of the Greyhound Racing Association Trust Ltd., was held recently in London.

Mr. Francis S. Gentle (chairman and managing director) said that with regard to racing restrictions the Government made an Order during the fuel crisis which had the effect of suspending greyhound racing entirely as from 11th February. This discrimination, whilst closing them entirely, allowed cinemas and theatres to continue. On the grounds that absenteeism must be prevented, the Government then called representatives of all sports to the Home Office and insisted upon their operating on Saturdays only, but horse racing was allowed to continue in mid-week and there had been no ban on cricket. The temporary Act was for a period expiring on 30th June 1948, and could not be extended except by new legislation, but could be ended at any time by order of the Secretary of State.

During the year the restrictions on maintenance and building had to all intents and purposes prevented any progress with the improvement of facilities which they would have liked to have made. Active steps had, however, been taken to replan their stadia on the most modern lines and some progress had been made in improving totalisator equipment to meet the demand. The photo-finish camera was now an established part of their equipment, and had proved itself invaluable.

The year 1946 had really been the first since the cessation of hostilities in which they had been able to return to activities other than greyhound racing. At the White City a full season of athletics had been held. At Harringay arena Roller Speedway, Ice Hockey and Boxing, etc., had been operated and the Board were taking steps that the arena was used as far as possible in the current year. During the current year they had recommenced speedway racing at Harringay Stadium.

Profit and sundry income for the year was £2,090,000 compared with £1,616,000 in 1945, which was an all-time record. Of that amount taxation absorbed in total £1,649,000, an increase of over £200,000, although E.P.T. was mainly at the 60 per cent. rate. The net profit of the Trust was £340,000 after appropriating £84,000 to reserve in the subsidiary companies. The directors recommended a final dividend of 45 per cent., making a total of 115 per cent. for the year. He had hopes that the present restrictions would be lightened, at any rate on some tracks, in the not too distant future, but till then it was obviously impossible to give any forecast for next year.

The report was adopted.

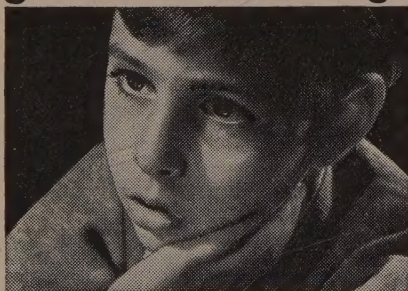


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# THEATRE WORLD



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(Incorporating PLAY PICTORIAL and THE AMATEUR STAGE)

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Edited by Frances Stephens

## July 1947

THE passage of the last month has confirmed our remarks about a theatre slump. The West End stage is passing through a difficult summer season, common enough before the war, but a rarity during the past seven years. *Angel*, Mary Hayley Bell's psychological murder play based on the Constance Kent case, was a notable casualty, particularly in view of Joyce Redman's brilliant performance as the unbalanced girl who murdered her baby brother. In view of all this, it seems more than ever important that our critics should give fair and unbiased reviews of plays in the little space they have at their disposal in these days. Were they altogether just, for instance, in the case of Tyrone Guthrie's revival of *He Who Gets Slapped* at the Duchess, which was withdrawn after only a fortnight, and which was to have been reviewed next month? Was it necessary to labour to such an extent the fact that a leading member of the cast unfortunately forgot his lines during the first performance (the play went without a hitch on the second night)? Few paid due tribute to the monumental achievement of the production as a piece of "visual" theatre. With radio drama forging ahead and British films developing more and more as an art, Tyrone Guthrie's particular genius for making his stage leap to life takes on a new significance. Bridie's *A Sleeping Clergyman* (Criterion); Noose (Saville) and *Pygmalion* (Lyric, Hammersmith), will be reviewed at length next month.

*1066 And All That* has moved to the Strand, its original pre-war home. Plays awaited with anticipation include *Deep Are The Roots*, *The Voice of the Turtle*, Noel

## Over the Footlights

Coward's *Peace in Our Time*, and Emlyn Williams' *Trespass*. It will be like old times to have the De Basil Original Ballet Russe at Covent Garden. The operas *Turandot* and *Il Trovatore* (which was produced on 23rd June), will also be reviewed in our next issue.

London playgoers, who gave no uncertain welcome to the American musicals, *Oklahoma* and *Annie, Get Your Gun*, knew how to greet film star Chico Marx when he came as star of the first International Variety season at the Casino. Chico, even apart from his famous brothers, has a wonderful stage personality, and it was well worth sitting through some indifferent turns for the pleasure of sampling his comic genius.

\* \* \*

The month brought the welcome news of Laurence Olivier's knighthood. Sir Laurence joins Sir Ralph Richardson as another of our leading younger actors whose recent unstinted work for the theatre has gained deserved honour during the past year.

These past weeks also brought the much regretted news of the death of James Agate, leading dramatic critic and man of letters. Jimmy Agate was a personality in an age of nonentities. Even if we did not always agree with his point of view, his witty writings will be greatly missed. It seems appropriate that we should have included in this number an appreciation of that well-known man of the theatre, S. R. Littlewood, who this year celebrates his fiftieth year as leading dramatic critic. With Mr. Littlewood among us our link with the English theatre's glorious past is firm indeed. F.S.

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# New Shows of the Month

"Tess of the D'Urbervilles"—Piccadilly, 20th May.  
 "Dark Emmanuel"—New Lindsey, 21st May.  
 "Twelfth Night"—Open Air Theatre, 22nd May.  
 "Boys in Brown"—Arts, 28th May.  
 "The Bird Seller"—Palace, 29th May.  
 "Edward, My Son"—His Majesty's, 30th May.  
 "Off The Record"—Apollo, 3rd June.  
 "A Fish in the Family"—Boltons, 3rd June.  
 "Ever Since Paradise"—New, 4th June.  
 "Life With Father"—Savoy, 5th June.  
 "Annie Get Your Gun"—Coliseum, 7th June.  
 "S.S. Glencairn"—Mercury, 9th June.  
 "Miranda"—Embassy, 10th June.  
 "Calcutta In The Mornings"—Players', 11th June.

## "Tess of the D'Urbervilles"

THE world of Thomas Hardy's novels seems almost as distant as the world of Chaucer, but his characters have a reality rare now in fiction. We may consider some of them rather preposterous, but we treat them seriously. Then, too, Hardy always tells a story. He tells it slowly, objectively and convincingly and the reader willingly gives credence and loans out his sympathy for use as required. The happenings in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* are unusual but the action alone is a sordid story. Hardy's presentation of the character of Tess and his power to weave Wessex all round us transform the sordid story into an idyll and one is inclined to overlook a small matter of murder. If Tess's pureness of heart and Angel Clare's prudery are unusual, unusual too is Alec D'Urberville's constancy. When these persons are given bodily form and set within the compact framework of a stage, the task of producer and actors to impose credulity upon the public is harder than the novelist's original task had been. Tess's crime is the hardest of actions to stage. It can be likened to that of Mary Lamb or to Zero's in Elmer Rice's *Adding Machine*. The theatre is not the place for action. On the stage, action is talked about rather than performed. This has been so since the time of Aeschylus. Of course, Tess's crime cannot be staged. We should be offended if it were. All we want is Tess, so played that we forgive her crime and banish it from mind, as we do that of Mary Lamb, and increase our love for her by dwelling once more upon her purity of heart and constancy of affection. Wendy Hiller does this naturally, gracefully, sincerely—one might almost say affectionately. "Dear Tess," we think as we watch, "Dear Tess." What is an Alec more or less? And yet Alec was constant

too, and did not seem such a bad fellow in Ronald Gow's adaptation. Henry Mollison touched him off very cleverly. Hugh Burden gave an admirable performance as Angel Clare, winning that sympathy in addition to credence so hardly to win from Angel, especially nowadays. The general production has been refined since the Bristol Old Vic presented the play at the New last November, and it is a model of artistry and efficiency. Guy Sheppard's decor is unchanged and very delightful. The small parts are mainly comic, but the central tragedy is not dimmed nor is any lyric quality lost by this frequent impingement of comedy. This power to keep comedy in its place is one of the things that distinguished Hardy and perhaps makes him seem distant. H.G.M.

(*Tess of the D'Urbervilles* was withdrawn on 21st June and will be followed at the Piccadilly on 9th July by *The Voice of the Turtle*.)

## "Dark Emmanuel"

**D**ARK EMMANUEL, by Gordon Hoile, is a loosely knit play, which proceeds rather crudely from improbable premises to impossible conclusions. Act 1 takes a long time to assume shape and then settles into a plot by Finance to impose a dictatorship upon this England. Act 2 takes equally long to declare itself and seems quite unrelated to Act 1. A trick with Time and a changed identity are employed to link up these two acts. It then transpires that the plot in Act 1 succeeded after the manner of a surgical operation which the patient fails to survive. This England has gone back; back to a primitive way of living which seems idyllic but is marred by superstitious subjection to a political priesthood.

Antony Eustrel, Monica Stutfield and Isabel Dean give interesting performances and hold attention even when for long the general situation is almost completely clouded in mystery. H.G.M.

## "Twelfth Night"

**F**OR once in a way the Open Air Theatre in Regent's Park began its season in brilliant weather and the sunny skies were a happy additional ingredient to the undoubted sparkle of the opening production. The youthful Viola and Olivia of Christine Pollon and Patricia Kneale might have lacked finesse in the confines of a theatre, but their naturalness was their chief charm on the park stage. Kynaston Reeves was a Malvolio who called for respect and sympathy, and the Sir Toby of George Merritt was a jovial and witty fellow, not so inebriated as some we have seen. Not the least charm of the production was the delightful



*Evelyn*: I'm going up to my room to get into bed, and get drunk ... very drunk.

Shaken, miserable, disillusioned and dispirited by the death of Edward and the loss of her husband's affections, Evelyn Holt (Peggy Ashcroft), now a dipsomaniac and shadow of her former self, leaves her husband Robert Morley, (left) to talk with their oldest friend, Dr. Parker (John Robinson). A scene from *Edward, My Son* at His Majesty's.



singing of Norman Platt, the Feste. Wilfred Fletcher's Sir Andrew Aguecheek was drawn on extra foppish lines. The comedy was also enhanced by Mary Honer as Maria. Michael Ingham added dignity to the thankless role of Orsino and Francis Drake's Valentine was a nice match for Viola.

*Twelfth Night* was produced by Robert Atkins, as also is the second production, *Lady Precious Stream*, which opened on 24th June with Louise Hampton in her original role. F.S.

## “Boys in Brown”

**B**OYS IN BROWN, by Reginald Beckwith, was first produced by Norman Marshall at his never-to-be-forgotten Gate Theatre in June 1940, so it will not be news to say that the play's power to inform, to impress and to entertain is remarkable. This revival is a brilliant piece of production altogether, but a particularly striking master-touch is the opening, giving a brief impression of stale comedians broadcasting jokes in which the point lies in the ironic introduction of the name of Borstal in chatter about Public Schools. This is a pregnant opening. The similarity of Borstal to a Public School is sufficient to make a joke, and the difference is ample for a drama. There is a recognisable Public School “type”; but in a Borstal Institution individuality is the rule, for each boy is a “case.” This play is very much the case of Alfie Rawlings, soapy, insidious, slimy and invertebrate, who infects the environment with the disgusting efficiency of a cuttle-fish. He is so well put over by John Carol that praise is difficult. One wants to hiss. Indeed, all the boys are so brilliantly cast that it is hard to imagine them in other plays. Nigel Stock, Tony Halfpenny and Michael Ripper have parts that provide opportunities and they deliver them wonderfully well. André

Morell gives a most agreeable character impression as the Governor, but I wish I could have shared the balanced optimism of some of his speeches. H.G.M.

## “The Bird Seller”

**I**T is somewhat astonishing that a production which in its individual parts is excellently done should prove in the aggregate so uninspiring. It must be that we are growing out of this kind of romanticism and are no longer spellbound by music of this type, however lilting and easy on the ear. Chief fault is the lack of humour, aggravated by the inclusion of a brilliant comedian like Douglas Byng whose talents are patently wasted. Nor is Adele Dixon called upon to display her many gifts in the role of the somewhat colourless Empress of Austria, though we remember with gratitude her rendering of the charming solo “The Cherry Tree.” Irene Ambrus is a vivacious Christel and sings well, as does James Etherington as Adam, the Bird-Seller. Roy Royston as a debonair Count Stanislaus tries to disguise the hoary nature of many of his jokes. The costumes and decor are lavish and attractive and Pauline Grant's Tyrolean ballet has many of the original touches we have come to expect from her choreography. Under the direction of Richard Tauber the orchestra left nothing to be desired, but even the inspiration he gave to the charming music by Karl Zeller could not infuse any real sparkle into a musical that just misses the mark. F.S.

## “Edward, My Son”

**R**OBERT MORLEY, as part author with Noel Langley of this wholly gripping episodic play, demonstrates a real knowledge of the theatre not surprising in so intelligent and finished an actor. Arnold Holt, self-made man, whose great obsession



is his worthless son, Edward, shows us in three acts and ten scenes his life story, as it were through his own eyes. We see how his worldly ambition, particularly on behalf of his son, destroys his wife who must look on helpless while her son is ruined by the indulgence of his doting and unscrupulous father.

Robert Morley as the father holds our interest from start to finish. We are fascinated by this overbearing man while fully aware of his lack of morality, in the widest sense. His relentless climb to prosperity and the peerage includes many doubtful dealings and at least one "dead body" in Harry Soames, his original business partner. Another victim is his attractive secretary, and he is in no way perturbed when his turn comes to deal with son Edward's betrayal of an innocent girl. With it all Lord Holt has an undeniable attractiveness. He runs true to type, unrepentant and self-justified to the end.

Edward we do not see. But whether as an unpleasant schoolboy or as a precocious young man about town, before the war gives him his chance to die a conventionally noble death, we heartily loathe him.

Robert Morley's brilliant performance is well partnered by Peggy Ashcroft's sensitive portrayal of Arnold Holt's wife; youthful and sweet in the early scenes, tragically alone and cast down at the end. John Robinson contributes another sympathetic doctor role much on the lines of his previous appearance in *The Gleam*. Leueen Macgrath we suspect enhances immeasurably the part of the secretary as written, and Richard Caldicot traces with understanding the passage of Harry Soames from crude self-confidence to suicidal ruin. Peter Ashmore directs, giving full flavour to the passage of time from 1919 to 1947. This is a play not to be missed. F.S.

### "Off the Record"

**A**MUSING naval manœuvring such as this is like falling off a log for two old hands like Ian Hay and Stephen King-Hall, or so it seems. The humour is splendidly maintained throughout, and one would be churlish to think it slightly odd that an MP should choose to exchange places with a Lieut.-Commander and vice-versa.

It goes without saying that the technicalities of commanding a destroyer are more difficult to comprehend than the jargon of the House. Tom D'Arcy, MP, is soon in difficulties and Hubert Gregg looks and acts the greenhorn with real conviction. Bill Gates as the masquerading MP finds great pleasure in scoring off Admiral Sir Maximilian Godfrey, which pompous and fussy role is played to perfection by Hugh Wakefield. Feminine interest is provided by a knowing ex-Wren (Pamela Matthews) and the Admiral's daughter (Eve Ashley). The authors were really inspired when they created Lieut. The Hon. Willy Aughton-

Formby, and so was the producer in casting Tom Gill for the part of the Admiral's scatter-brained Flag Lieutenant. Roger Maxwell contributes a slightly exaggerated picture of a true-blue Parliamentary reactionary of more than two wars ago. F.S.

### "A Fish in the Family"

**A**N imaginary, castle of great antiquity on the West Coast of Scotland is the scene of Sir Basil Bartlett's comedy, *A Fish in the Family*. The date is 1937, when antiquity may be said to end. Lady Blair informs her prospective daughter-in-law, and incidentally her audience, that the founder of the family formed an association with a mermaid and that mermaids have been a vexatious influence ever since. Their longevity is considerable. Two or three generations of the sea-folk span the entire course of recorded human history. Lady Blair is preparing to relinquish the struggle against the mermaids, anticipating that the heir's fiancée will carry on the fight, when a crisis is brought about by her younger son, who actually brings a mermaid into the house. Here is a situation indeed, and even the author seems unable to cope with it. Treatment is neither eerie nor farcical. The impossible should surely be one or the other. The title indicates farce; the build-up promises romance; the situation is fantastic; but the treatment is merely matter-of-fact. Did not Rossetti complain to William Morris that it was difficult to take seriously a man who had a dragon for a brother? I think that goes for mermaids too.

Marie Ney, as Lady Blair, says wise things well and most things wisely. Her contribution to the success of the production is considerable. Ernest Thesiger, as her ill-esteemed and barely tolerated chaplain, is vastly amusing in his own, his very own, way. Barbara Shaw is more beautiful and seductive than most young women could hope to be, if immobilised with their legs tightly encased in mackerel-coloured, American cloth, fastening with a "zip" at the back. H.G.M.

### "Miranda"

**H**OT on the tail of Laura, the Kensington mermaid, *Miranda* arrives at Swiss Cottage. Mr. Peter Blackmore may not have serious ideas about mermaids, but he has the right idea of what constitutes a gay evening in the theatre. His comedy is like whipped cream. The mermaidiness of *Miranda* is delicately hinted to us, until Nurse Cary's hysterics leave us in no doubt. The reactions of Sir Paul and Lady Marten to the phenomenon in their flat are deliciously expressed by Ronald Ward and Nora Swinburne. Comedy acting of the highest order makes these two delightful to watch, but there are also Joan Haythorne, Harry Geldard and Bryan Cole-





A colourful scene from *Oklahoma*, the outstanding American musical success at Drury Lane, which will be featured in our next issue. (Picture by Angus McBean.)

man, who all have speaking eyes. This phrase, "speaking eyes," is too colourless, too vague, to describe Miranda's behaviour whenever a man appears. She leers and continues to leer at him until a fresh male arrives. In this, there is neither magic nor subtlety but she gets results. Genine Graham makes Miranda exceedingly pretty and well supports the thesis that mermaids are the adversaries of all true women. Margaret Withers and Diane Hart complete a delightful company. Richard Bird's production is admirable. One may say that the Embassy has done it again.

H.G.M.

### "Ever Since Paradise"

**C**LEVER though the mechanics are, this Priestley comedy, purporting to demonstrate why marriages break down, left an impression of triviality. The ingenious structure of a play within a play, seemed but a cloak to hide lack of inspiration in the central theme. It is in fact a one-act play stretched the limit of its elasticity to cover the period of three.

It must be admitted the audience loved it. Indeed one could not fail to be entertained by the superb clowning of Ursula Jeans and Roger Livesey in an astonishing variety of roles. With Jane Carr and Dennis Arundell (almost static at two pianos) they form the audience of an inner play, where-in Joy Shelton and Hugh Kelly demonstrate the pitfalls of the early days of matrimony; and enliven proceedings by hopping on the secondary stage to appear as the young people's parents and incredibly eccentric friends.

The author directs, no mean feat considering the complicated nature of the piece. F.S.

### "Life With Father"

**T**HIS artless comedy of Victorian life in New York is a safe bet for the family and all who like their theatre without problems or innuendoes. On the way over from Broadway it must, however, have lost an additional something which guaranteed that record run of eight years.

Leslie Banks blusters through the part of Father, displaying much adolescent charm without somehow conveying the idea that he is the genuine article. Sophie Stewart's Mother is more convincing (but what part is there that this entrancing actress does not adorn?). Her American accent is not too pronounced to emphasise the fact that the rest of her red-headed family speak best English public school, and yet it is there, as naturally delightful as her Scots tongue ever was.

Murray Macdonald has contrived a speedy production which never drags, and the substantial background of the Day home is conveyed with conviction in Anthony Holland's charming decor and costumes.

With the reservation that the addition of one or two leading American actors might have turned first rate entertainment into brilliant theatre, one can recommend *Life With Father* as one of the most likeable current productions. Rowland Bartop, Phillip Hillman, Peter Thomas and Brian Parker are the Day sons, and Dorothy Gordon and Diana Beaumont appear as Mary Skinner and Cousin Cora. F.S.

### "Annie Get Your Gun"

**T**HIS big American musical hit was received almost as rapturously as *Oklahoma*, though this was scarcely deserved,



in spite of its undoubted merits. *Annie, Get Your Gun* is a straight-from-the-shoulder musical with no finer shades of meaning, but with many delightful Irving Berlin lyrics and a couple of first rank stars in Dolores Gray and Bill Johnson. The story concerns a Wild West touring show, none other than Buffalo Bill's, and what happens when a sharp-shooting, but naive young woman, Annie Oakley, joins the company and challenges the supremacy of the star shot, Frank Butler. The subject naturally gives opportunity for noisy high spirits, colourful costumes and even an exotic Red Indian dance. Helen Tamiris came from America to take charge of production and choreography.

The role of Annie Oakley has become something of a classic, like Rose Marie, and Dolores Gray has all the requisite personality. Hers is a big personal triumph. Our own Wendy Toye has a leading part in which she displays some clever dancing.

F.S.

### "S.S. Glencairn"

**M**ANY years ago Eugene O'Neill wrote some One Act Plays of sea life, whose characters were seamen on the British tramp steamer, *Glencairn*. All the plays had fascinating and suggestive titles, like "Bound East for Cardiff," "In the Zone," and "The Moon of the Caribbees." These three plays are now presented at the Mercury with the prosaic label, *S.S. Glencairn*,

which does less than justice to all concerned. Even the film-makers did better than this. Who that saw it does not remember with admiration a film called, "The Long Voyage Home"? Here is another opportunity to renew acquaintance with Yank, Driscoll, Cocky, Davis, Smitty and the rest of the artificially assorted crew. The three plays chosen deal with Death, Disappointment and Drink, and have the signature of the master written all over them. Setting and acting correctly supply the maximum amount of realism required in a theatre. "In the Zone" unexpectedly proves the most moving drama to watch of the three in the present programme. Philip Dale, Anthony Booth and Alan Wheatley ably headed an excellent cast.

H.G.M.

### "Calcutta in the Morning"

**H**ERE at the Players' Theatre where members carry their drinks to their seats and the party spirit prevails, it would be improper to measure the success of the evening by merely dramatic standards. Considering the occasion, Geoffrey Thomas' new play, *Calcutta in the Morning*, was extremely earnest and rather too long. It tells a discursive story of five people who live 5,000 years. Uncertain of its theme, it finally settles on disarmament, which is stubborn material for a dramatist.

H.G.M.

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A delightful moment at the opening of the show with members of the company singing "Croquet! Croquet!" the charming opening number. The scene is the lawn of the Grange, Mayfield, home of the Willows, in the summer of 1870.

## "Bless the Bride"

AT THE ADELPHI

①F recent years there has been a marked falling off in the quality of English musicals. More than doubly welcome, therefore, is the new Ellis-Herbert musical at the Adelphi, which we can proudly acclaim as one of the best London has seen in many decades. The happy partnership of A. P. Herbert and Vivian Ellis has reached full fruition and the delicate artistry of Tanya Moiseiwitsch, who has designed the costumes and scenery, and of Wendy Toye, the director, makes for a visual satisfaction rarely experienced in the theatre.

The story is naïve enough and we never

doubt there will be a happy ending for Lucy Willow, who elopes with a young Frenchman, much to the horror of her proper mid-Victorian parents. But the pithy Herbert lyrics and the entrancing Vivian Ellis music clothe the tale in charm and wit, and Lizbeth Webb and Georges Guétary are two young stars of real quality.

*Bless The Bride* is presented by Charles B. Cochran in association with Anthony Vivian. C. B. Cochran, who has given London so many lovely shows of high artistic merit, is to be congratulated on this latest and probably most brilliant of his many productions.

PICTURES BY JARCHE





*Lucy* : Papa has pronounced opinions about the French: but I am sure that any friends of yours would be welcome. What sort of persons are they?

The Honourable Thomas Trout (Brian Reece), whom *Lucy* (Lizbeth Webb) is about to marry, though not very willingly, has invited some gay French theatrical friends to *Lucy's* home.

(Below) :

*Lucy* : Our dear Mamma explained to me for the first time the...the details...of the machinery...for the increase of the population.

*Lucy* indulges in some confidences with her sisters.

(Below) :

*Thomas* :

*If they can't love,  
And if they can't kiss,  
How d'you explain  
A family like this?*

An amusing number in which Thomas Trout defends English womanhood after the arrival of his friends, *Pierre Fontaine* (Georges Guétary) and *Suzanne Valdis* (Betty Paul), who are seen in the centre.







*Augustus :*  
*Pray, what is this unseemly scene?*  
*What do these wild athletics mean?*

Lucy's father, Augustus Willow (Eric Fort) interrupts a game of tennis, boldly introduced by Pierre and his friends.

Thomas has erroneously represented Pierre as a member of the French Diplomatic Corps and he is invited to Lucy's grandparents' (James Harcourt and Hebe Bliss) golden wedding party. There he wins all hearts with a delightful French song, "Ma Belle Marguerita."

*Pierre :*  
*In October when they fill the vinepress,*  
*Marguerita treads the grapes with me.*  
*Marguerita has the feet of angels:*  
*All the little boys come out to see.*







*Nanny : What shall I do without you, Ducky?  
And what will you do without me?*

On the morning of Lucy's wedding, her Nurse (Anona Winn) takes a tender farewell of her. Lucy, who has fallen in love with Pierre, is more than ever unhappy at the thought of marrying Thomas.

*(Below) :*

*We deck the tender frame  
Which Man, the brute,  
Will soon so rudely claim.*

The bride is arrayed in her wedding gown.



*(Right) :*

*Lucy : Farewell, dear home. How can I leave  
you  
Without a tender...*

A moment towards the end of Act 1. At the last moment Pierre arrives disguised and runs away with Lucy, herself disguised in the page boy's uniform. Meantime Buttons (Babatunde Macaulay) is dressed up in the bride's gown and veil and Lucy is well on her way when the discovery is made.





*Suzanne : Ah, the cold English miss! Regardez! I wonder the sea does not boil when she is in it.*

The opening scene of Act II, La Plage, Eauville, where the runaway Lucy and Pierre are spending an idyllic time, heavily chaperoned by Suzanne. But the hue and cry is on and Lucy's father and mother, together with Thomas Trout, are already in Eauville in search of the erring girl.



*Robert : Ah, ha, Monsieur. You are from England.*

The English party do not get very far in their pretence of being French. They come to the Cafe des Pommes in search of Lucy and here their quest ends.

*(Left):* Stewart Vartan as Cousin George, Edna Clement as Lucy's mother.  
*(Right):* Peter Lupino as Monsieur Robert, Maitre d'Hotel.





Lucy :

*This is my lovely day.  
This is the day I shall remember  
the day I'm dying.*

*You can't take this away :*

*It will always be mine,*

*The sun and the wine,*

*The sea-birds crying.*

Pierre and Lucy sing their charming song, "This is my lovely day," little knowing that Lucy's parents are near at hand.

(Below) :

*Pierre : To France, the queen of  
golden life,*

*I raise a golden glass.*

News comes of the declaration of the Franco-German War, and Pierre, in a scene of wild patriotic fervour, goes off to join the colours, leaving Lucy, now reunited with her family, to return heartbroken to England.



Nanny: Twenty - one  
candles to-day, Ducky.

Nanny mixes a birthday cake for Lucy's 21st birthday. Lucy's sisters, Ann Fidelity, Charlotte Patience, Elizabeth Prudence, Frances Fortitude, Millicent Punctuality and Alice Charity, are played by Joan Elvin, Pamela Carroll, Winifred Hammick, Mildred Griffiths, Natasha Wills and Diana Beall.



Thomas:  
In youth I seldom  
doubted  
That what I said was  
right:  
In middle age, now  
twice as sage,  
I know that I was  
right.

Thomas, whose disappointment over his broken engagement has much sobered, now hopes anew that Lucy will agree to marry him, since Pierre has been reported killed.



Here's a kiss for one  
and-twenty,  
And a happy, happy  
day!

The sisters dance gaily around the birthday cake, but Lucy is still sad at heart. Later, however, she agrees to become engaged again to Thomas Trout.







The dramatic scene towards the end of the show when Pierre unexpectedly returns alive and well. Thomas, making the biggest sacrifice of his life, agrees to renounce Lucy and the lovers are finally reunited.

(Left):

Pierre and Lucy sing "This is our lovely day." A moment just before the finale.

# The Man I Envy

by ERIC JOHNS

**T**HE only man I envy in the theatre is neither actor, author nor impresario, but our doyen of dramatic critics, S. R. Littlewood, who celebrates his jubilee in the autumn. This inveterate theatregoer has seen over 10,000 plays in the past 50 years and is still sufficiently of our time to enthuse over such essentially contemporary productions as *Oklahoma* and *Now Barabbas*. I may live as long, and I may see as many plays, but I shall still envy Mr. Littlewood because, he had the good fortune to live through the Golden Age, seeing Irving, Ellen Terry, Bernhardt and Duse in their heyday. These giants have gone and in our changed world we can never hope to see their like again.

In a room overlooking Drury Lane's historic portico, with walls hidden by signed portraits of the Kendals, Hare, Alexander, Toole, Genevieve Ward and the great Irving himself, Mr. Littlewood edits *The Stage*. He does far more than that. He takes youngsters back into the past. A "youngster" is anyone who had the misfortune to be born too late to see Irving at the Lyceum. One cannot do anything about so tardy a birth, but there is a decided compensation in being present when S. R. L. recollects the magic of Lyceum limelight. I never saw Irving, but, thanks to S. R. L., I have done the next best thing.

Briefly, the fifty years of Mr. Littlewood's professional life have seen the death of the actor-manager and the rise of the producer. As he will tell you, "The theatre at the time of the Diamond Jubilee was prosperous. It had no rivals, such as the cinema and the radio, and it was socially distinguished. It was the era of the great actor-managers—of Irving, Bancroft, Tree, Alexander, Hare, Wyndham, the Kendals, Forbes-Robertson and Charles Hawtrey. My first London notice was Forbes-Robertson's *Hamlet*, at the Lyceum, on 11th September 1897, though, of course, I had been familiar with Irving's productions from my school-days.

"The theatre was an exciting place in the 'Nineties. Thanks to the actor-managers and to such enlightened critics as Walkley, Archer and Shaw, a new educated public was beginning to take a lively interest in playgoing. On the other side of the curtain new blood was obviously coming into the profession, from a much higher class than the old "pro" of the 'Seventies and the 'Eighties. Culture and education were beginning to count on the stage.

"Actor-managers, with all their vanities,



A delightful and characteristic impression of S. R. Littlewood by Robert Lawson.

were intelligent men and their greatest service to the theatre lay in teaching dramatists to write for actors. They trained and brought out a galaxy of dramatists, such as Pinero, Henry Arthur Jones, Oscar Wilde, Stephen Phillips, H. V. Esmond, R. C. Carton, Haddon Chambers, and to a lesser degree, Barrie and Shaw. They demanded big parts for themselves. Audiences paid to see them, so they gave them value for their money, performing star-parts on a stage so vividly illuminated that the public could appreciate what they paid to see. Plays written as vehicles for star-performers had the virtue of containing at least one interesting character, which was better than none at all. Published plays meant nothing to the actor-manager, whose only interest was in the work as it appeared on the stage, not as it looked on the library shelf.

"The formation of the big syndicates delivered the fatal blow to the actor-manager. It killed him by compelling him to do what he was told instead of what he wanted. The era of the dramatist followed that of the actor-manager, when Shaw, Barrie, Maugham, Galsworthy, and later Lonsdale and Coward came into their own. Yet, at the turn of the century, the actor-managers had a great influence upon playwrights, Alexander fostered British dramatists and even had the courage to produce *Paolo and Francesca* by Stephen Phillips. It set the seal of success upon the trium-

(Continued on page 30)



# Whispers from the Wings

By  
LOOKER ON



URSULA JEANS

**I**F Ursula Jeans signed a contract to appear in non-stop revue, she could hardly expect to work harder than she does in Priestley's new play, *Ever Since Paradise*, at the New Theatre. This "entertainment chiefly referring to love and marriage," flaunts stage convention to such an extent that it provides Miss Jeans with the most varied and unconventional part on the London stage.

With Roger Livesey as a compère-partner, she is a sort of commère, sitting at the side of the miniature stage upon which the love-story of Paul and Rosemary is enacted from start to finish. The play is an attempt to discover just where romance went wrong and how mistakes might have been avoided. Far from being a mere spectator of this story of love, marriage and near-divorce, Miss Jeans becomes a number of different people in the narrative. From time to time she dons a wig and a different dress and takes her place on the little stage to play a key character in the life-story of Paul and Rosemary. Among other parts, she plays Paul's mother; Rosemary's psychic friend; a fortune teller; and Paul's rich red-headed client. All totally different human beings, they demand revue technique from the actress playing them.

Once the curtain rises on *Ever Since Paradise*, Miss Jeans has no time to pause until she drinks the final toast at the end of the play. It entails a series of costume changes in such rapid succession that waits are out of the question, and even the inter-

vals are occupied with further changes. The clothes are most ingenious creations, made on the wrap-over dressing-gown system to facilitate quick-changes. Yet, from the front, none of them gives the impression of being a trick garment. They are all dead-right, and reveal something of the character of their wearers.

When Miss Jeans first read the part she was rather scared about the speed of the play. There is no time, before her entrances, for contemplation of the various characters she impersonates during the evening. In previous plays she has been accustomed to playing only one character. While making-up in the calm of her dressing-room, she gradually slipped into the skin of the part, so that by the time she reached the wings for her first entrance, she was more Kate Hardcastle or Anne Bullen than Ursula Jeans.

With a regular handful of parts to play in *Ever Since Paradise*, such leisurely contemplation is out of the question. She has to think herself into the mood of each new character as she applies each new make-up. She found this high-speed assumption of each new thought-process the most difficult aspect of this involved and complex role. On the other hand such a part offers no terrors in the event of a long run. Teeming with varied interest and characterisation, it does not easily grow stale, even with nightly repetition. Apart from playing all her cameo-impersonations, Miss Jeans comes down to the footlights, as did Vivien Leigh in *The Skin of Our Teeth*, to take the audience into her confidence and direct their attention to various aspects of the love-story taking place on the miniature stage. These asides, unlike lines belonging to characters in the story, can be varied in delivery from night to night, and so save the sanity of the player in the event of a phenomenally long run.

Although billed as new, Priestley wrote this play before the war. Ralph Richardson pulled it out of a drawer in his desk when Ursula Jeans was looking for an Ensa entertainment during the war years, but he was sent to Gibraltar with the Fleet Air Arm before a production could be organised. Miss Jeans fell in love with the part and determined to play it as soon as conditions permitted. Later, when Stephen Mitchell offered to present Miss Jeans and her husband, Roger Livesey, in a play on his return to the theatre after being demobilised, they suggested *Ever Since Paradise*. An exchange of cables between London and Jerusalem, where they were playing to troops at the time, confirmed arrangements, and that is how the play eventually found its way to St. Martin's Lane.



YVONNE ARNAUD as Jane in S. N. Behrman's adaptation of Somerset Maugham's short story.

## “Jane” AT THE ALDWYCH

• ONE of London's most successful straight plays, this clever adaptation of an original story by Somerset Maugham, gives Yvonne Arnaud one of the most delightful roles of her career. Whether as the dowdy widow or later as the transformed socialite Miss Arnaud is at her wittiest. Indeed, with Ronald Squire, Irene Browne and Charles Victor also in the cast laughs are plentiful. Simon Lack as the young man whom Jane rather unaccountably marries, proves himself one of our coming young actors, and Ursula Howells and Jeremy Hawk provide some of the more serious touches. The play, which is presented by H. M. Tennent Ltd., and the Theatre Guild, is skilfully directed by Richard Bird. The decor is by Ruth Keating.

PICTURES

BY

ALEXANDER

BENDER





*Mrs. Tower:* Selfish as ever!  
Your devotion to yourself  
amounts to a cult.

*Tower:* I find it as diverting  
as any other cult.

William Tower (Ronald  
Squire), a successful  
writer just back from  
abroad, calls on his ex-  
wife, Millicent (Irene  
Brownne).



*Mrs. Tower:* Jane!

*Jane:* Hello, Millie. How are  
you, dear?

The arrival of Millicent's  
sister-in-law, Jane Fow-  
ler, proves a somewhat  
embarrassing moment.



*Tower:* That's a very pretty  
locket.

*Jane:* Do you like it? My  
husband gave it to me  
when we were married. It  
contains his photograph.  
Would you like to see him?

Jane, a Belgian, who  
married Millicent's  
brother in the first World  
War, is completely un-  
conscious of her incon-  
gruous appearance in  
Millicent's London house.  
She gives the satirical  
William much amuse-  
ment, though he begins  
to appreciate very much  
her native wit and  
shrewdness.

*Jane:* It really astonishes one, Millie, that you could ever have left a mature man like William for an elderly adolescent like Lord Frobisher.

Jane is not in the least intimidated by Lord Frobisher, newspaper lord and old lover of Millicent. Lord Frobisher, on the other hand, quails before the widow's uncompromising forthrightness.



*Mrs. Tower:* You're going to be so dreadfully unhappy.

*Jane:* I don't think so, you know. I always think I'm a very easy person to live with. I think I shall make Gilbert very happy and comfortable.

Jane delivers a bombshell when she announces that she has "a young man." Millicent is astonished to hear that she is engaged to a young architect, Gilbert Frobisher, who proves to be none other than Lord Frobisher's nephew.

*Jane:* Gilbert is my young man.

Millicent's daughter, Anne, and her American friend, Peter Shay, cannot conceal their astonishment on meeting Gilbert. Later Jane discovers that Anne is in love with Peter, a worthless young man who is already secretly married, and the rest of the play is largely taken up with Jane's clever moves to break Anne's infatuation.







*Jane* : They think I've gone crazy.

*Gilbert* : Am I so undesirable?

Jane is vastly amused at the reaction of her in-laws, but obviously nothing is likely to deter Gilbert, who is very much under her spell.



*Jane* : I am the creation of my dear Gilbert.

*Tower* : My congratulations.

Fourteen months later when William meets Jane again he is astonished at the amazing transformation. Moreover, to his surprise, Jane and her young husband are apparently perfectly happy.



*Tower* : Isn't she amazing?

*Frobisher* : Since you ask me, I liked her better before.

Lord Frobisher, in spite of himself, becomes the latest victim of Jane's charm. This is all in the well-laid plans, for Jane is eager to further the career of Gilbert, who has been disowned by his rich uncle. There is also the problem of Anne, whom Jane is determined to save from Peter Shay.

*Jane* : You must be at least my age—if not a few years older.

*Frobisher* : Damn it, Jane. You are the only woman I know who makes me feel I'm on my last legs!

Lord Frobisher, who up to now had imagined himself a gay Lothario, irresistible to the opposite sex, now undergoes a process of self-disillusionment at Jane's hands.







*Gilbert* : You don't love me any more.

*Jane* : I didn't love you when I married you, Gilbert.. I made that quite plain.

Jane's formidable schemes begin to reach fruition. She announces to Gilbert that she wishes to end their marriage. Gilbert is considerably upset, as also is Anne when Jane disillusions him about Peter Shays. But she sees this is for the ultimate good of the two young people, and also is it more in keeping that she herself should marry the reformed reprobate Lord Frobisher.



*Mrs. Tower* : I suppose it was bound to happen. It was inevitable you would walk out on her.

*Gilbert* : I think you are under a misapprehension, Millicent, I am not walking out on Jane. Jane is walking out on me.

An amusing moment towards the end of the play when Millicent begins to discover that Jane is a very clever woman indeed.

BY OUR  
AMERICAN  
CORRESPONDENT

E.  
MAWBY  
GREEN

John Gielgud and Pamela Brown in a scene from *Love For Love*, recently produced on Broadway as the second production in Mr. Gielgud's most successful season.



## Echoes from Broadway

**JOHN GIELGUD'S** production of Congreve's *Love For Love* sponsored by The Theatre Guild and John C. Wilson in association with H. M. Tennent Ltd., of London, officially closed the 1946-7 theatrical season in New York. 31st May is designated as the closing date, it being the day Actors' Equity run-of-the-play contracts expire, and if it was not as well received as Mr. Gielgud's previous offering of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, blame it on the standard of perfection the production of the Wilde comedy set.

Restoration comedies are a great rarity on the American stage and the fact that so fine and buoyant a production as this Gielgud one will only be able to find an audience for five weeks rather highlights some of the reasons why. *Love For Love* may be a brilliant satire on the dissolute manners of the upper class in the late 1600's written in an elaborate, highly polished comic prose, but for American audiences brought up on fast moving, hard hitting comedies written practically in mono-

syllables, it is definitely a museum piece and something of a chore to listen to and watch. The very broad scenes like the one where the foppish Tattle tries to teach the awkward country girl, Miss Prue, the way a maid is made in the city, are relished; the tamer love affair wherein Mrs. Foresight makes a cuckold of her husband with Scandal entices their interest; Valentine's mad scene which allows John Gielgud to satirise his Hamlet makes fine cocktail conversation for the would-be sophisticates, but almost everything else seems to require some special knowledge or interest in the Restoration period or Restoration theatre to be appreciated—a knowledge, needless to say, which very few people have over here (including your correspondent)—and so large portions of *Love For Love* are greeted with an undesired solemnity which even the fine performances of the cast and the sprightly direction of Mr. Gielgud cannot overcome.

Of the original 1943 London cast, apart from Mr. Gielgud, only the charming



Marian Spencer has crossed the Atlantic to repeat her part of Mrs. Foresight. Adrienne Allen is playing Yvonne Arnaud's role of Mrs. Frail; George Hayes has Leon Quartermaine's part of Scandal; Cyril Ritchard has scored the biggest personal success in the meaty role of Tattle, played by Leslie Banks in London while Robert Fleming is Ben; Jessie Evans, Miss Prue; and Malcolm Keen, Richard Wordsworth, John Kidd, Donald Bain, Philippa Gill, Sebastian Cabot, Mary Lynn, and the brilliant Pamela Brown as Angelica, complete the cast.

John Gielgud's "straight" performance of Valentine was praised for its technical brilliance, but also questioned in some quarters for breaking the mood of the play by not being played "artificially" like the other members of the cast, including his vis-a-vis, Pamela Brown—which brings the fascinating Miss Brown to mind once again. Having seen her only twice—both times in artificial comedy—we were more than eager for a chance to see her in something different. This The Theatre Guild took care of very nicely by letting her play the title role in the sentimental European comedy, *A Church Mouse*, opposite Basil Rathbone, in their weekly radio programme. Virtually all the top theatrical talent has appeared on this programme, and we would not hesitate for a moment to put Miss Brown's performance at the top of the list. Her rich, throaty voice and perfect enunciation are ideal for radio, but the variety of moods she can express with that voice is truly amazing. It set us wondering whether there could possibly be a role she couldn't successfully fill. From Ophelia to Lady Macbeth or a Noel Coward heroine to Electra, we couldn't think of a one. Miss Brown, we suspect, is an actress.

The goal of every playwright seems to be a Broadway production, and no price apparently is too high to pay. Just look what it cost Ivan Goff and Ben Roberts to see their names listed as authors of *Portrait in Black* outside the Booth Theatre, New York.

In 1945, before Leland Hayward first tried out this play with Geraldine Fitzgerald in the leading role, a pre-production movie deal was arranged on the usual fabulous terms: \$100,000 down against a percentage of the film distributor's gross, the movie company's intention being to star Joan Crawford, with Carol Reed at the megaphone. But Leland Hayward was dissatisfied with the way the play shaped up on the road and decided against bringing it to New York. But somehow or other the authors got a London production and no less a personality than Diana Wynyard to star—and still the play failed. So back to New York they turned their attention, and persuaded David Lowe and Edgar F. Luckenbach to give their pride and joy a

new production—for a price. New York producers are reluctant to do a play when the movie rights are gone, so the authors arranged for their new producers to share not only in their stage royalties up to \$22,500 but in their take from the film distributor's income as well. For this they got Claire Luce, and a set of bad notices.

Miss Luce came back from England expressly to play in Maurice Valency's *The Thracian Horses*. However, the American management ran into financial difficulties and postponed production to the Fall, so Miss Luce turned to *Portrait in Black* in the interim. After all the splendid things we heard over here about Miss Luce's London and Stratford triumphs, it was a bit unfortunate she decided to return in such obvious claptrap—not that her portrayal wasn't good, but rather that it was too good and honest for the script.

## Ballet

NEW ballets of the month have included *The Sailor's Return*, danced by the Ballet Rambert during their season at Sadler's Wells Theatre. This marked a new success for Andrée Howard, who was responsible for choreography, decor and costumes. The music is by Arthur Oldham; the story based on the novel by David Garnett. Sally Gilmour danced with naive simplicity, understanding and pathos the part of Tulip the unhappy African bride—a Princess in her native land—who is brought by her husband to England to his inn, "The Sailor's Return," only to become the victim of local prejudice and animosity. Walter Gore and Frank Staff as the husband and his brother have virility and a sense of character.

The new works presented by the Ballets des Champs Elysées were reviewed at length in our February issue, following Miss Audrey Williamson's visit to Paris. Little remains to be said over and above her excellent appraisal. *La Sylphide*, however, proved a little disappointing, but the Company had many setbacks through illness, and the limitations of the stage at the Winter Garden may account for the shortcomings of the corps de ballet.

*Le Jeune Homme et la Mort* will remain the triumph of this visit. Jean Babilee and Nathalie Philippart danced with sheer inspiration in this now famous ballet created by Roland Petit and Jean Cocteau to music by Bach. If the Company had done nothing else this would have justified their existence. *Le Bal des Blanchisseuses*, delightful acrobatic orgy in a laundry, is well suited to the Company's particular genius. Roland Petit's *Les Forains* remains the most lovable of their works, and it was good to see Gordon Hamilton's inspired Clown. His witch in *La Sylphide* was further proof that he is an outstanding—and developing—character dancer. L.J.

(Right): A sparkling scene from Act I which gives some idea of the magnificent settings and costumes by Joseph Carl.



(Below): A dramatic moment from Act II. Rigoletto (Marko Rothmuller, kneeling centre) pleads with the Duke's friends.



## "Rigoletto"

AT THE  
CAMBRIDGE

● Scenes from the New London Opera Company's brilliant production of Verdi's opera. It is over a year now since Jay Pomeroy set out to prove that London was ready to support continuous opera at a leading West End theatre. There are now five operas in the repertoire, and the success of Mr. Pomeroy's brave venture can no longer be in doubt.

(Right): Gilda, broken-hearted, overhears the love scene between the faithless Duke and Maddalena.  
(Left to right): Antonio Salvarezza as the Duke of Mantua, Bruna Maclean as Maddalena, and Daria Bayan as Gilda, in the dramatic last act.





## The Man I Envy (Continued)

phant career of Henry Ainley and is still considered one of the finest poetic plays in our language. Wyndham had a reputation for economy, which was not entirely a disadvantage. He forced his dramatists to write plays for a cast of not more than five leading characters. Such concentration helped to make the Criterion so long the home, not only of farce, but also of high comedy.

"Barrie was ever-conscious of the importance of the actor. Great players inspired him to write many of his plays throughout his long career. His first success, *Walker*, London, was written for Toole in 1892, and his last play, *The Boy David*, was created for Bergner in 1936. Hilda Trevelyan was the inspiration for his Wendy and Maggie in *What Every Woman Knows*, and Ellen Terry, after her Lyceum triumphs were over, stirred him to write *Alice Sit-by-the-Fire*. Shaw became the great man of the theatre after Irving's death, winning the battle between author and actor-manager. He was the first dramatist to write his play as he liked, and not according to the requirements of an actor-manager, and, what is even more significant, he demanded that it should be produced in his way. The producer, to a certain extent, replaced the actor-manager and came into his own when the comedies of Lonsdale and Coward called for increased speed and team-work.

"Certain personalities in the theatre during the past fifty years have left their mark, even on the work we see today. The Lyceum, of course, was the paramount influence of the time. Irving's productions taught us that the theatre was beautiful; they were things of high art, providing escapism from the smugness and drabness of Victorian life. Irving walked with princes, dominating the world of culture. As an actor he was a blend of archangel and arch-devil. Becket revealed one side of his nature, and Mephistopheles the other. He presented the extremes of villainy and virtue and idealised both by the power of his art and the charm of his personality.

"No one lived more completely for others than Ellen Terry. She embodied, as no other actress has done, the ever-womanly desire and power to give understanding,

sympathy and inspiration. As Beatrice her gracious and joyous womanhood had a colour and splendour that was entirely new. No one who saw her can ever forget that vision of beauty floating down the garden steps, wearing a great golden Medici collar, looking as if she had just emerged from a Tintoretto canvas.

"The gentleman-Hamlet of Forbes-Robertson was sociable and friendly—never terrific, but always sympathetic. To me it still remains the most satisfactory interpretation of my half-century. For years *Hamlet* has been over-produced. The performances of both Gielgud and Olivier suffered because they had to waste their energies in leaping on and off rostrums and fussing about tricks with properties.

"To William Poel and Ben Greet the modern theatre owes much. They joined forces in one of the most memorable theatrical events of my time, the first modern production of *Everyman* in the Charterhouse. Poel with his Shakespearean productions in the Elizabethan manner was one of the major prophets of our theatre. Every good Shakespearean revival of the past forty years has owed something to him. Robert Speaight, Robert Atkins and Edith Evans are distinguished disciples. His revival of *Macbeth* revealed the psychology of the play more vividly than any other I have seen. Lillah McCarthy as Lady Macbeth scored a memorable triumph by receiving the momentous news of Duncan's pending arrival in the guise of a heartless Elizabethan lady at her toilet.

"Musical comedy became respectable in my lifetime as a critic. Young men would hardly have taken their sweethearts to see Nellie Farren at the old Gaiety, but they can safely take their wives and families to see Cochran's *Bless the Bride* at the Adelphi. I saw Duse's London debut in 1893 as Marguerite Gautier; I saw Coquelin as Cyrano and Jane May in *L'Enfant Prodigue*, as well as Albert Jules Brasseur, Jane Harding, Lucien Guitry, Réjane, and the Divine Sarah in all their greatest parts. The visits of these international celebrities used to be as much part and parcel of the London season as Ascot and Lords. They are a sad loss, but the cosmopolitan Nineteen-Forties have their visits from the Comédie Française, the Lunts and the New York Ballet. The theatre is still doing its best."

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## Talent from America

(Left):

Harold Keel as Curly and Betty Jane Watson as Laurey in a scene from *Oklahoma*, the record-breaking musical play at Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. These young American players bring a freshness and enthusiasm to their work which has taken London by storm.

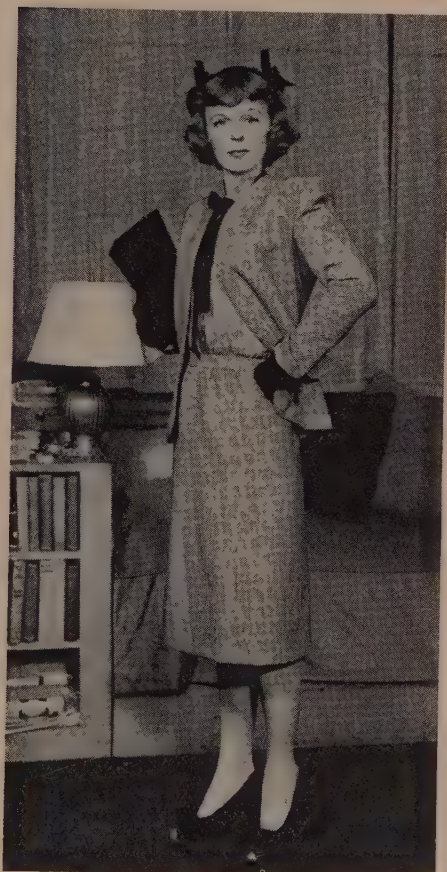
(Picture by Angus McBean)



HAROLD KEEL and BETTY JANE WATSON



DOLORES GRAY



MARGARET SULLAVAN

who co-stars with Wendell Corey in the John Van Druten success, *The Voice of the Turtle*, presented by Alfred de Liagre, Jr., and Gilbert Miller. The other member of the cast is Audrey Christie, and the play is due for presentation in London early in July. (Picture by Vandamm)

(Left):

The riotous Broadway musical *Annie Get Your Gun* is a big success at the Coliseum. Dolores Gray, who is seen as the irrepressible Annie Oakley, has scored a personal triumph.



# Falstaff—of the Fitting Shop

by RICHARD HILLIAR

ONE of these days, an enterprising actor—with no immediate prospects other than an optimistic agency-tour—is going to realise that in the big factory he passes every day, there is a fully-equipped stage in a hall able to seat two or three thousand people, a surprising number of employees with an alert, intelligent interest in matters theatrical, and a shrewd management never too busy to consider anything that might make a sensible contribution to welfare and morale.

And having thought that over for a minute or two, he will decide to walk into the factory, to get hold of someone responsible, and to put up the idea that the theatre is just as capable of forming a sound partnership with industry as are broadcasting and music. In a word, that he—as representative of the theatre—is prepared to train, encourage, and develop amateur dramatic talent.

What kind of reception will he get?

Naturally enough, he is hardly likely to be asked to address the Board of Directors during the first five minutes; but he will almost certainly meet the Personnel Manager—an approachable individual, who is, necessarily, an expert psychologist, a man, or woman, of wide human sympathy, an executive with vast responsibility and commensurate authority.

He will learn very quickly that industry is no longer a profit-sweating slum of illiterate robots, but a masterpiece of organisation in which humanity is unquestionably predominant; an organisation with its own thoroughly competent medical services, its own efficient systems of education, its own high standards of cultural art. He will discover that there is not the remotest suspicion of brutality—which is industry without art—about his surroundings, his reception, or his listener; and, later on, when he explains his ideas to representatives of management and workers, he will find them as responsive and as intelligent an audience as he would ever wish to have.

Probably, he will see at once that his suggestion is by no means a thunderbolt and that—with a first-class orchestra and

perhaps a well-trained choral society in flourishing existence—dramatic projects have been contemplated more than once; but what will be unique about it is the offer of genuine professional assistance and all the potential advantages that that implies.

Quite clearly, he will not be offered a thousand-a-year job on the spot, nor will he be given arbitrary authority to use the entire premises and the whole staff for a production of *Anthony and Cleopatra*, but he will be an odd character if he cannot see how to make capital out of a step that should have been taken years ago.

He will, indeed, have achieved a fusion of two elements which, for all their apparent diversity, have much in common; and if the theatrical world showed acumen enough to consolidate his advance, I am confident that there would be a tidal wave of interest in the theatre that would be not only profoundly encouraging but highly profitable.

There are, of course, dramatic societies by the score, and many factories already have them; but I know of no single case where professional interest has been taken or help offered.

The BBC takes microphones into workshops and produces "Works Wonders"; the majority of Carroll Levis' discoveries are working men and women; many a band, playing well up to professional standard, is made up of men from machines, assembly-shops and boiler-houses. Is variety more democratic than drama?—or music more plebeian than mime?

Industry possesses its own comedians, crooners, impressionists, and musicians. It is simply not feasible that it should be unable to offer a Tess, a Lady Windermere, a Becky Sharp, a Sydney Carton, or a Malvolio.

On the contrary, I would need a lot of convincing that I have not seen an exquisite Cordelia filing innumerable correspondence-copies, and I have certainly laughed with and at the perfect Falstaff—in a fitting shop.

Nor is industry insensible of these things.



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There is, of course, a lot of flapdoodle talked and written about occupational psychology, but psychology—which is little more than commonsense—has long since demonstrated that a happy worker is a good worker; and a happy life is a full life.

At heart, every human being is three parts actor (the fourth — appreciative audience), and the professional stage would find an astonishing response to an offer of lively co-operation, if for no other reason, because amateur dramatics are an acknowledged and satisfactory means of sublimation.

The resultant benefit to the theatre would be automatic. The new understanding, the new sense of personal contact, would put the whole matter on a totally different basis; and if it sharpened the critical faculties of audiences, well . . . better to have a house full of enthusiastic critics than of vacant seats.

There is already a marriage between art and industry, and if the partners haven't quite settled down to domestic accord, most of the post-honeymoon squabbles are over. The arrangement works well, and for the first time in history, machines are producing articles both useful and attractive—even if we aren't allowed to have them.

If one alliance, why not another?

And why not one of which the progeny would be, not the inanimate offspring of mechanical efficiency, but the reasoning, imaginative, individual children of an ageless art and a tireless industry?

## AS WE GO TO PRESS

**BENJAMIN BRITTEN'S** new opera, *Albert Herring*, produced by Frederick Ashton, was performed at Glynedebourne on 20th June. Country life in Suffolk is the setting for this lyric comedy, whilst the activities of the "May King," a green-grocer's son, provide the action. The small cast includes Joan Cross and Peter Pears, both of whom appeared in Mr. Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, when it was first produced last year.

*The Eagle Has Two Heads* will be withdrawn from the Globe Theatre on 12th July, and with Eileen Herlie in her original role, will later tour the provinces. It will be followed at the Globe Theatre on 16th July by Emlyn Williams' new ghost play, *Trespass*, with the author and Francoise Rosay in the leading roles. Others in the cast are Leon Quartermaine, Marjorie Rhodes, Gladys Henson, Daphne Arthur, Raymond Westwell, and Roddy Hughes. The setting, a castle in Wales, has been designed by Michael Weight.

A ballet new to London, *Graduation Ball*, will mark the opening of the first post-war season at Covent Garden of De Basil's Original Ballet Russe. *Les Sulhides*, *Paganini*, *Carnaval*, *Les Présages*, *Beau Danube*, *Protée*, *Le Coq d'Or*, *Prince Igor*, *Prodigal Son*, *Scheherazade*, *Aurora's Wedding*, *Good Humoured Ladies* and *Symphonie Fantastique* are in the repertory. The company numbers sixty and includes Lubov Tchernicheva, Tatiana Riabouchinska, David Lichine, Olga Morosova, Genevieve Moulin, Vania Psota, Nina Stroganova, Siren Adjemova, Roman Jasinsky, Vladimir Dokoudovsk, Moussin Larkina and April Olrich, fifteen-year-old pupil of Tchernicheva. Serge Gregorieff is régisseur général.

## The Beauty Box

**POMEROY** are now able to supply their excellent creams in containers which have a distinctive decorative advantage over those recently on the market—they are marked by transfers instead of stick-on labels. The pink and white jars with the white cap adorned by an embossed dove (emblem of Pomeroy range) are extremely attractive.

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The cleansing cream is one which we can definitely recommend. A light soft cream, it removes waste matter by liquefying and loosening last traces of make-up. It can be applied liberally and left for a while, so that the pores are really penetrated, before removing, which leaves the face cleansed, refreshed and soft.

Dathos is a special food for very dry skins and after thorough cleansing with cream, Dathos should be massaged into the face and neck. It contains the feeding oils necessary for nourishing a sluggish or roughened skin. After massaging, the surplus should be removed with tissue.

## Hand Protection

We spoke in these columns recently of the wonderful preparation which was specially made during the war by Innox to save workers' hands from skin diseases. By rubbing the cream into the hands an invisible glove is formed which protects the skin. Barrier cream is now being made available to the general public and is sold at 1/3 by any Innox stockist. It is a wonderful boon to the housewife as her hands are protected from dirt and grease and a simple washing operation in warm, soapy water removes both the dirt and "glove."

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## Amateur Stage

CHELTENHAM can be quoted as a good example of a Town Council being determined to give the town a suitable amateur playhouse. In 1945 they decided to convert a small swimming bath into a theatre. Subject to current difficulties and shortages the work was completed. and Shaw's *Arms and the Man* launched it.

Now called the Civic Playhouse, it is in the centre of the town. It seats 280.

The stage has cyclorama 12-way dimmer board and modern lighting, width of 22 ft. by depth of 16 ft., and scenery stocks include three sets of flats and other properties.

Productions are seven evening shows per fortnight, from Saturday to Saturday. A Youth Drama Festival occupies a fortnight each year. The consultant producer is Mr. G. Hannam-Clark, a professional actor of long experience. He is responsible to the Council for the standard of production, attending rehearsals and if necessary offering advice or help.

The Corporation agreed with representatives of the societies using the theatre upon sharing terms of 60 per cent. of the total receipts to the Corporation and 40 per cent. to the society concerned in the production of the play. In arriving at these percentages the Corporation made themselves responsible for providing the use of the theatre, the provision of a consultant producer and a resident stage carpenter, attendants, cashier and the booking facilities, all printing, advertising and bill-posting, and the society to find costumes, make-up, etc., royalties and transport.

Mr. W. Nugent-Monck, Director of Maddermarket Theatre, Norwich, paid a two-week visit to Austria to lecture on behalf on the British Council. His subjects included: Twentieth-Century Drama; the Elizabethan Theatre; Shakespeare, his life and times. He spoke to students at universities and to theatrical professionals.

The Shelley Players, of Pontypridd, have been in existence for nearly ten years, and now rank as one of the leading dramatic societies in South Wales. They have provided varied fare, including *Robert's Wife* and *Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary* by St. John Ervine, Shaw's *How He Lied to her Husband*, and *Barrie's Mary Rose*. Never appearing in competition, they have, by their productions, raised over £1,200 for numerous charitable organisations. Two of their most popular productions were plays of Welsh life, *The Joneses*, and *Rodric's Household*, written by their producer, E. E. Macarthy. These two plays had very successful runs in most of the large towns in Glamorgan, and *Rodric's Household* finished up this season with a performance at the Grand Pavilion, Porthcawl, the popular Welsh seaside resort.

The British Drama League are organising in 1948 a course for the training of Instructors of Amateur Drama, similar to that held in 1947. Daily sessions from Monday to Friday will commence on 12th January, for three months, and visits to theatres and amateur dramatic groups will be planned for the evenings and on Saturdays. Production, Stagecraft, Organisation, and General Knowledge of Drama are included in the syllabus. Financial assistance will be given to students, who should have a fairly wide experience in play production and should be under 35 years of age.

*Love's Labour's Lost*, the first post-war production of the Oxford University Dramatic Club, was presented in the beautiful gardens of Merton College on 18th and 25th June. The club has been re-constituted this term, again under the direction of Nevill Coghill.

*Jane Eyre*, adapted from Charlotte Brontë's novel by Helen Jerome, was presented by the Drama Students' Players, at the Twentieth Century Theatre, for three nights commencing 16th June.

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## Bookshelf

*The Other Theatre.* Norman Marshall (John Lehmann. 15/- net).

*The Penguin Music Magazine.* (Penguin Books, 1/-).  
*She Came to Command.* Michael Birkin, with  
Introduction by Robert Atkins. (King & Staples, 8/6 net).

THE most stimulating fact in theatrical development during the past quarter of a century has been the work of the smaller experimental theatres. The discovery of new talent as well as the presentation of standard classics, has been the noteworthy achievement of such enterprises as the Lyric, Hammersmith, the Gate, of former days the Oxford Playhouse, and the group of others, more recent, belonging to a similar category, and concerned with creative and courageous work which has done much to infuse more vigorous life and vitality into the larger, well-known theatres of the West End.

We owe an immense debt to these ventures, and it is well that an authentic record of their work should be presented to us. This has been done by Mr. Norman Marshall, in his most excellent book. It is a narrative full of inspiration and encouragement, and a timely tribute to the outstanding pioneers of this "other theatre" to whose faith and courage British drama owes more than it realises.

There is a vivid and generous record of Nigel Playfair's splendid work in reviving the Lyric, Hammersmith (then known locally as The Blood-and-Flea Pit). There is an epic quality in the story of the Gate, "a squalid looking place." It was so out of the way that enterprising small boys in the district would charge twopence to pilot would-be members of the audience to their destination. Yet what splendid work was accomplished to the success of which the late James Agate did noteworthy service. In the story of the Festival Theatre, Cambridge, there is a fascinating description of the producer, Terence Gray, subsequently wine-grower in France until compelled to leave by the German invasion, when he turned to breeding race horses in his native Ireland with the same enthusiasm and efficiency. The Sunday Theatre, the Amateur Theatre, the work of Lilian Baylis at the Old Vic, and of Ninette de Valois and the English Ballet, the Shakespeare Memorial, the Repertory Theatres, and many others are included in this admirable book. Not only has it paid a necessary tribute to many whose names and works will not be forgotten, but it is a valuable illustrated contribution to modern theatrical history, written with graphic style and competent knowledge.

The name Penguin is in itself a sufficient guarantee of excellence, and the multitude of music lovers will find this latest publication worthy of the highest praise. It covers a wide field in a marvellously condensed space. The Proms, Gramophone Records, Broadcast music, Music of the Films, Opera and Ballet, are all effectively dealt with in a striking economy of space (yet with a print that is delightfully clear and easy to the eye) and numerous other topics and pictures are included. Wonderful value for a shilling!

Phases of thought and life in revolutionary Russia form the background of Birkin's arresting play. It is written in verse which is marked by a remarkable rhythm, and an arresting mastery and manipulation of verbal forms and sounds. The Mechanised Church is a concept not easily forgotten.

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The theme is firmly wedded to a background of recent Russian history, while the characters are expressive of an ironical criticism which requires a reading of the play for its full understanding.—L.J.

Also received:—*How Swift The Tide*, a novel of theatre life, by Enid Gwynne. (Rockliff, 8/6 net).

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